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Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF

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ON

INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO BORDER SECURITY

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

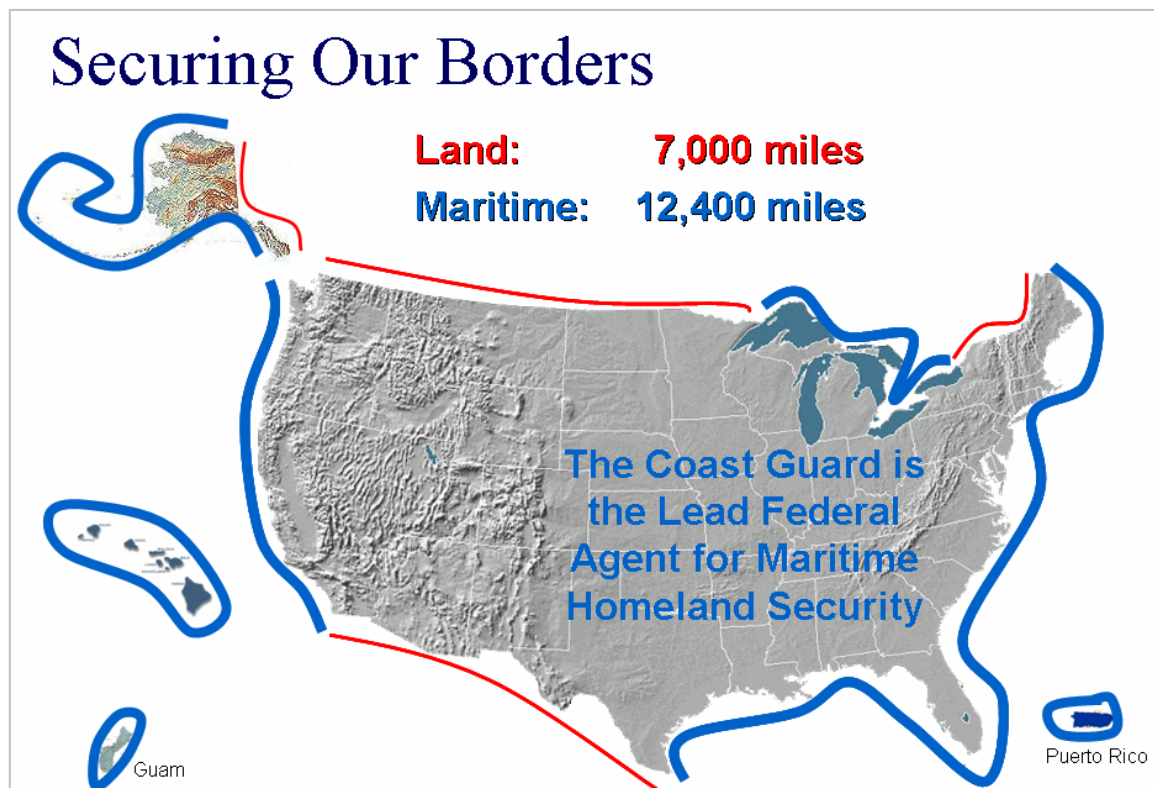
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION SHARING, AND TERRORISM
RISK ASSESSMENT**

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 28, 2006

Good morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished members. It is my pleasure to be here today, alongside Ms. Cynthia O'Connell, Intelligence Director of ICE and Mr. Tom Bortmes, the Intelligence Director of CBP, appearing before you today to discuss the Coast Guard Intelligence Program's role in border security.

The security of the U.S. borders is a top priority for the Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This hearing is a testament to the continued importance placed on border security and recognition of the Coast Guard's vital role in port and border security. Border security conveys the thought of land masses converging together. The reality is our maritime borders are the longest front in this battle. The Coast Guard's authority focuses not on land-to-land borders but land-to-water borders that include the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans as well as the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes. These shores involve key border security issues that must be included in any border security discussions and decisions.



As the Nation's primary maritime law enforcement agency, an armed force, and lead Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agency for maritime security, the Coast Guard has significant authorities and capabilities with regard to maritime security. Still, success in achieving maritime border security requires the full and complete cooperation of our interagency, state, local, tribal and private sector partners.

The maritime domain is an avenue for those wishing to smuggle people and illicit drugs into our communities – and an avenue that could be exploited as a means to smuggle weapons of mass destruction and/or terrorists into our country. In 2005 alone, the Coast Guard

- Intercepted 9,500 undocumented migrants attempting to enter the United States illegally by sea, a 100 percent increase over 2001; and
- Prevented more than 338,000 pounds of cocaine (an all-time maritime record) and more than 10,000 pounds of marijuana from reaching the United States.

While the 9/11 Commission noted the continuing threat against our aviation system, it also stated that “opportunities to do harm are as great, or greater, in maritime or surface transportation.” There has been a great deal of focus on container security, which is appropriate; however, a container is only as secure as the ship and crew that carries it. In fact, the most often observed U.S. maritime threat remains smuggling. As on land, we know that there are numerous professional migrant smuggling rings that operate in the maritime realm. The proximity of U.S. population centers to the maritime domain and the diversity of maritime users present significant and wide ranging vulnerabilities. Effective intelligence support can address these vulnerabilities to detect and defeat threats along our maritime borders.

Many of the Coast Guard’s mission successes are cued by intelligence. In addition to supporting our focus on preventing terrorist attacks, timely intelligence is critical in our efforts to stop international maritime drug trafficking, maritime alien smuggling, illegal high-seas driftnet fishing encroachment of U.S. natural resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone, and damage to the marine environment. Intelligence is a needed force multiplier given our limited assets and expanding mission requirements, it is the value added to enhancing maritime domain awareness.

Leveraging our longstanding partnerships and unique maritime authorities, access and capabilities the Coast Guard has significantly enhanced nationwide maritime security. The role of intelligence is to provide timely, accurate and actionable information so that decisions can be made and actions taken that support the operational commanders. Significant challenges remain and much more work needs to be done, but we are focused on the right priorities.

The Coast Guard Intelligence and Criminal Investigations Program has established and actively participates in several partnerships to enhance border security and other Homeland Security initiatives, such as:

- The Coast Guard works in close partnership with DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) and other elements of the Department to provide intelligence support to homeland security. We are providing strong support for the standup of the intelligence functions within OI&A by detailing intelligence analysts and assisting in building relationships with other Intelligence Community partners.
- The Coast Guard Intelligence Program and the Office of Naval Intelligence continue to build an effective joint intelligence partnership to enhance maritime domain awareness. The Coast Guard’s Intelligence Coordination Center is co-located with the Office of Naval Intelligence, which comprises the National Maritime Intelligence Center (NMIC);

- The NMIC has been designated as the core element for the Global Maritime Intelligence Integration (GMII) Plan. The GMII Plan is one of the eight support plans that make up the National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS). The Coast Guard's Intelligence Coordination Center (ICC) and the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) have been the foci of the GMII effort thus far. Achieving Final Operating Capability (FOC) is dependent upon strong representation from the other core elements, including: DHS – CBP and ICE, DOJ – FBI and DEA, Treasury – OFAC and FINCEN, NSA, and NGA. The overarching GMII requirement is to identify, locate, and track potential threats to U.S. maritime interests and subsequently transfer accurate, relevant, and collaborated information to those operational entities.
- Within the Coast Guard's Intelligence Coordination Center (ICC), the Coast Guard and CBP have exchanged personnel to enhance data sharing between the ICC's COASTWATCH program (which gathers and analyzes information based on the ship's 96-Hour Notice of Arrival (NOA) report on vessels and people approaching U.S. ports) and CBP's National Targeting Center (cargo tracking) process. COASTWATCH has improved processing of NOAs by more than 600 percent since FY05. This COASTWATCH mission has detected and provided advance warning about numerous arriving individuals identified in federal law enforcement and immigration databases as criminal or security concerns, including active warrants and "deny entry" orders for previous border crossing violations. In addition, several individuals wanted for questioning by federal agencies about possible extremist associations have been identified in advance of arrival and referred to the relevant agency for investigation.
- The Coast Guard provides access, where authorized and appropriate, to its intelligence and criminal investigations databases, as well as advice to others developing intelligence sharing architectures. The Service has also provided intelligence analysts, exchange personnel, and liaison officers to other agencies active in the maritime arena;
- The Coast Guard's Intelligence and Criminal Investigations Program provides a permanent presence on the FBI's National Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and select regional JTTFs;
- "Operation Drydock", which began in December 2002, is a joint Coast Guard and FBI criminal and counterterrorism investigation into national security threats and document fraud associated with U.S. merchant mariner credentials. Currently, the databases compiled are managed by the Coast Guard Investigative Services (CGIS) and are used by El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), Coast Guard ICC, and Coast Guard Sector Commands nationwide. The "Operation Drydock" databases are also used by Coast Guard Regional Examination Centers (REC) to vet applicants seeking merchant mariner documents and licenses; and
- "Operation Panama Express" is a multi-agency Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation that began in the mid 1990s to help stem the flow of illegal narcotics flowing from Central and South America via maritime means. The Coast Guard Investigative Service is a partner in Panama Express. The CGIS agents assigned to Panama Express speak fluent Spanish and have a wealth of practical hands-on experience in Coast Guard maritime law enforcement operations and CGIS narcotics investigations.

The Coast Guard has also increased its efforts to share law enforcement and intelligence information collected by the Coast Guard with other DHS components and other federal government agencies. In addition, the Coast Guard's Intelligence Program activities have been enhanced to assist in countering potential maritime threats through:

- Establishment of Field Intelligence Support Teams (FIST) in various key U.S. ports. FISTs gather local law enforcement information, establishes contacts, interviews masters and crewmembers to better understand maritime threats;
- Enhanced intelligence capability at the theater-level with the standup of the Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centers (MIFCs) Atlantic and Pacific. The MIFCs increase collection and analytical capabilities, enhance all-source intelligence and information fusion, improve the timeliness and quality of intelligence support to Coast Guard operational forces. The MIFCs also ensure the rapid reporting of information gathered by Coast Guard forces into the Department of Homeland Security and Intelligence Community at the national level;
- Conducting Port Threat Assessments as a complement to the MTSA-mandated Port Security Assessment, to provide analyses of threats for specific ports, inclusive of both terrorism and crime – foreign and domestic – using law enforcement and intelligence information;
- Fielding of Sector Intelligence Officers put intelligence support at the tactical level; and,
- The Coast Guard's membership in the Intelligence Community; our wide-range of missions, and our expertise in the maritime domain allows us to interface in numerous and diverse forums at various levels within the DoD components, law enforcement agencies, intelligence community, state and local stakeholders, and private industry.

Analysis of the maritime threat to U.S. ports is challenging. Characterization of incidents and trend analysis is complicated by the convergence of large volumes of cargo, alien smuggling networks, the narcotics trade, terrorism, regional conflict, maritime criminal enterprises, and some activities that fall into multiple categories but fall short of being a direct security threat to U.S. ports. It is the Coast Guard's overarching strategy, through layered security architecture, to "*push out our borders.*" Our unambiguous goal is to meet threats far offshore in order to prevent hostile persons, vessels, or cargoes from entering our ports or coastal regions. Our ability to push the borders out is an essential element in protecting our homeland.

The Coast Guard faces challenges in the maritime domain similar to those of our colleagues in securing the land border – with a limited set of resources, located amid vast geographic areas and huge amounts of legitimate activity – stop those seeking to do us harm. The foundation of the Coast Guard's maritime strategy relies on three key priorities:

- Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness;
- Establish and Lead a Maritime Security Regime; and
- Deploy effective and integrated Operational Capability.

These are not stand-alone goals, but rather part of an active system of layered maritime security. For example, the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) led to the establishment of domestic and international AIS carriage requirements for certain commercial vessels. But without investment in systems to collect, analyze and disseminate the AIS signals we lose the opportunity to assess threats early. Similarly, the detection, identification and interdiction of small vessels (that certainly do not advertise their position) used by smugglers throughout the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific requires persistent surveillance capabilities. In the end, Coast Guard assets must be capable of mounting a dependable response to identified threats lest we have information but not the capability to act.

Coast Guard assets and systems are required to operate across a diverse operating area including within our ports, in the littoral region, and far offshore. Thanks to the strong support of the administration and Congress, a number of initiatives are underway to transform Coast Guard capabilities. I would like to highlight a few of these initiatives as each will have a broad and substantial influence on our intelligence capabilities to mitigate current and future maritime risks.

Integrated Deepwater System. The centerpiece of the Coast Guard's future capability is the Integrated Deepwater System, recently revised to reflect post-9/11 mission requirements such as enhanced intelligence gathering and handling capabilities. The Integrated Deepwater System was designed to secure the nation's maritime borders.

The vessels delivered by the Deepwater program will serve as the Coast Guard's "eyes and ears" and allow the nation to see, hear and communicate activity occurring within the maritime domain. The Coast Guard's sustained presence along our maritime borders is unique. More capable Deepwater assets, linked to each other and multiple agencies through Deepwater's net-centric command-and-control system will significantly improve information sharing, collaboration, and interoperability in the maritime domain.

Vessel tracking. Securing our vast maritime borders requires improved awareness of the people, vessels and cargo approaching and moving throughout U.S. ports, coasts and inland waterways. The most pressing challenges we now face involve tracking the vast population of vessels operating in and around the approaches to the United States. In support of this requirement, the Coast Guard has:

- Established the Automatic Identification System (AIS) to provide continuous, real-time information on the identity, location, speed and course of vessels in ports that are equipped with AIS receivers. AIS is currently operational in several major U.S. ports, and the Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification (NAIS) project will expand AIS capabilities to ports nationwide; and
- Under U.S. leadership the International Maritime Organization recently unanimously adopted a global long Range Identification and Tracking scheme that will provide information about all commercial ships of 300 gross tons and above operating within a 1,000 nautical miles of our coast whether the ship is bound for a U.S. port or is on innocent passage. Additionally, we will have tracking information out to 2,000 nautical miles when ships have declared its intent to arrive in a U.S. port.

Maritime C4ISR Enhancement. Existing Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems and operational concepts must be

reoriented and integrated with current and emerging sensor capabilities and applicable procedures. Similar to the nation's air space security regime, the maritime security regime must integrate existing C4ISR systems with new technologies and national command-and-control systems and processes. For example:

- The Common Operating Picture (COP) and corresponding Command Intelligence Picture (CIP) must continue to grow and expand to federal, state, and local agencies with maritime interests and responsibilities. The COP provides a shared display of friendly, enemy/suspect and neutral tracks on a map with applicable geographically referenced overlays and data enhancements. The COP is also a central element of the Deepwater solution tying Deepwater assets and operational commanders together with dynamic, real-time maritime domain information. This link is essential to ensure effective command and control of all available Coast Guard assets responding to a myriad of border security threats.
- An expansive and interoperable communications network is critical for maritime security operations and safety of life at sea. In the coastal environment, the Coast Guard's Rescue 21 system will provide the United States with an advanced maritime distress and response communications system that bridges interoperability gaps, saves lives and improves maritime security.

There is no single solution to maritime border security. It requires a layered system of capabilities, established competencies, clear authorities, and strong partnerships. The cost of allowing blind spots in our awareness, security regimes or operational capabilities is too high.

This is the mandate for the Coast Guard Intelligence and Criminal Investigations Directorate to support those priorities, which ultimately supports the overall strategic and national level objectives of the Nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.